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Comparison of Community & Hospital Pharmacists' Sources of Information About Medicines: Use of the UKMi Network

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Introduction

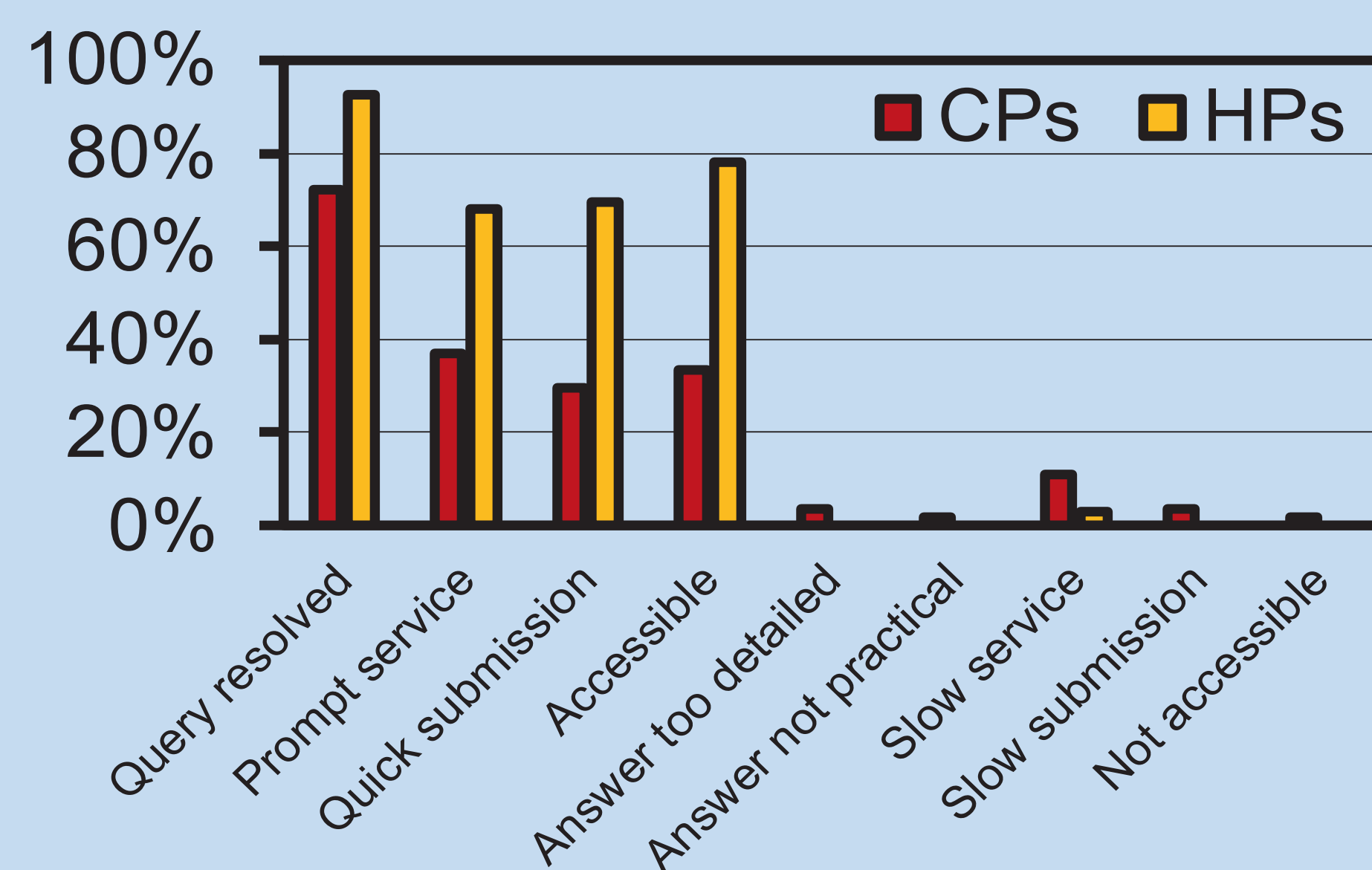
- Despite making up ~70% of pharmacists, community pharmacists (CPs) submit a small minority of the enquiries received by the UKMi network.
- Hospital pharmacists (HPs) submit a significant proportion of enquiries, despite making up ~20% of the work force.
- Newer CP services may require increased access to information about medicines, so the objectives of this study were to identify how often CPs & HPs use the UKMi network, & to explore reasons for any differences.

Method

- Quantitative data were collected via a questionnaire sent to CPs, HPs & MI centres across the SW of England in 2011.
- The questionnaires contained only minor sector specific variations.
- Qualitative data from telephone interviews were analysed to explore the reasoning behind individual pharmacists' decisions.

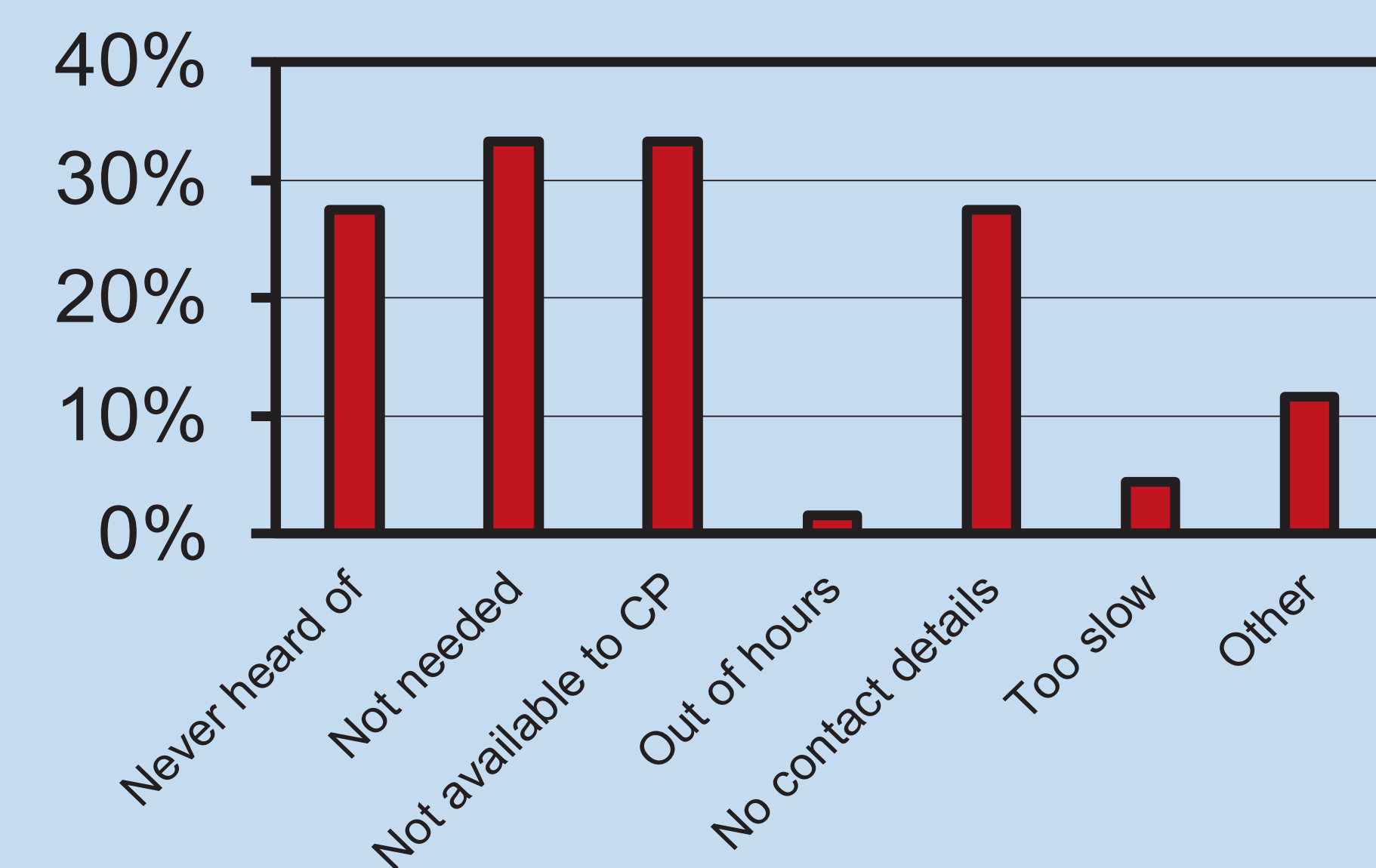
Results

- 56%** Proportion of CPs who had never submitted an MI enquiry to the UKMi network
- 100%** Proportion of HPs who had previously submitted an enquiry to the UKMi network
- 3%** Proportion of UKMi enquiries in the study area submitted by CPs in the previous year
- 32%** Proportion of UKMi enquiries in the study area submitted by HPs in the previous year
- 3** Number of MI centres in the study area reporting no CP enquiries in the previous year



Feedback on UKMi network enquiry answering service from previous users

- 5%** Proportion of CPs who submitted an enquiry to the UKMi network at least once a month
- 55%** Proportion of HPs who submitted an enquiry to the UKMi network at least once a month
- 35%** Proportion of CPs who submitted an enquiry to the National Pharmacy Association (NPA) at least once a month
- 93%** Proportion of CPs who had previously submitted an enquiry to the UKMi network who would do so again



CP reasons for not having ever submitted an MI enquiry.

"Other" included difficulty in making contact with people in hospitals, use of other sources (esp. NPA), inconsistent standards & the belief the service had closed in the 1980s!

- During interviews, HPs highlighted the value of being able to talk to an experienced pharmacist.
- CPs highlighted the importance of obtaining an answer quickly.
- CPs had concerns that the UKMi network might not be able to provide an answer quickly, but knew from experience that the NPA provides a speedy service.

"If I get an answer for this patient, are they even going to come back?"

- CPs' comments suggested that the role & availability of the UKMi network was not effectively promoted in this sector.

"I can get some information to my patient or doctor within 5 minutes, which is really important." [CP w.r.t. NPA]

Discussion

- In general, the UKMi network is meeting the needs of HPs & is widely used by this sector of the profession.
- To a lesser extent, it also appears to meet the needs of the few CPs who use it, but poor promotion to this sector & MI pharmacists' possible lack of understanding of useful timescales for CPs prevent more widespread use of the service.
- As clinical services in CP grow & the future role of the UKMi network is determined, these issues may need to be addressed.